

Election Address: Revd Maryam Razavi Mehr

Election Address – General Synod 2026

I am standing for election to the General Synod because I believe that the experience and voice of parish clergy should be heard. So much of the life of the Church happens in our local parishes: in worship, prayer, pastoral care, teaching, relationships and the everyday work of serving people. I would be grateful for the opportunity to listen to clergy across the Diocese of Manchester and to represent their experiences and concerns at General Synod.

I am currently serving as Assistant Curate at St John (Hopwood) & St Luke (Heywood), and I am at the beginning of my ministry in the Church of England. I am still learning and growing in my ministry, and I value that. I believe that being willing to listen, to learn from others and to recognise that we do not have all the answers is an important part of Christian ministry.

My journey in ministry began long before my ordination in the Church of England. For 15 years, I served as a pastor among Farsi-speaking people, refugees and people from different national and cultural backgrounds. This was a very important part of my life and shaped the way I understand pastoral ministry. It taught me to listen carefully, to build trust and to walk alongside people through different circumstances in their lives. It also taught me how important it is for people to feel welcomed, respected and heard, especially when they are living in a new country or facing difficult situations.

Alongside this pastoral experience, I worked in Iran as a secondary school physical education teacher. I have a Bachelor's degree in Physical Education and specialised in gymnastics. Through teaching, coaching, mentoring and officiating at competitive levels, I developed experience in leadership, discipline, organisation and team management. Working with young people and helping them develop confidence taught me the value of patience, encouragement and listening. These are qualities that I continue to bring into my ministry today.

I completed three years of formal theological training at St Hild College. My theological learning continues through my experience of parish ministry, where I am gaining practical experience in pastoral care, preaching and church leadership. I am also interested in theology and psychology because I want to understand people more deeply and to support their spiritual and emotional

needs. In the future, I hope to pursue a master's degree to deepen my theological understanding and strengthen my ministry.

Since 2025, I have also been a member of the Deanery Synod and have attended meetings on behalf of my church. This has helped me to see more clearly how important it is for our churches and clergy to work together, to listen to different perspectives and to support one another across our parishes.

If elected, I would want to listen particularly carefully to the experience of parish clergy. I would want to support clergy in the realities of parish ministry, including their wellbeing, responsibilities and the challenges they face. I also care about the future of our local churches and about mission: helping people encounter the Christian faith and creating churches where people can find a place to belong.

My own experience has also made me particularly aware of the importance of cultural and linguistic diversity within the Church. I speak Farsi and English and have experience of working with people from different cultural backgrounds. I am involved in a monthly service at St Aphrahat the Persian Sage, and I value opportunities to help people from different backgrounds feel welcomed and connected to the life of the Church.

I would not come to General Synod believing that I have all the answers. I would come ready to listen, to learn, to pray and, when necessary, to speak honestly and constructively. I would bring with me the perspective of someone serving in parish ministry, together with many years of pastoral experience, teaching, leadership and working with people from different backgrounds.

If elected, I would serve the clergy of the Diocese of Manchester with honesty, care and openness. I would take the responsibility seriously and would seek to represent people faithfully, while listening to the wider Church and contributing positively to its life and mission.

“Thank you for taking the time to read my Election Address and for considering my nomination.”